

1806, YEAR OF BIRTH OF THE “CRUEL”
PINGUICULA CRYSTALLINA SM. (LENTIBULARIACEAE)

TO THE MEMORY OF 200 YEARS *FLORAE GRAECAE PRODROMUS*
(1806-1816) AND *FLORA GRAECA* (1806-1840)

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Introduction

Since its discovery, *Pinguicula crystallina* Sm. has deeply impressed botanists and friends of flowering plants at every turn. It was discovered in 1787 by John Sibthorp and Ferdinand Bauer in the Troodos mountains of Cyprus, but this tiny carnivorous herb first became known to the scientific botanical community in 1806, with the publications of the famous *Florae Graecae Prodromus* and *Flora Graeca*. In 1914, Holmboe (p. 216) called it “the most typical species and also the greatest ornament of the vegetation in the springs.”

The rare and tiny violet-like rosulate plant has enchanted the eyes of all plant hunters who have seen it. Indeed, its scientific name *crystallina* was chosen of because of “the clear drops on the leaves glittering like diamonds in the sunshine.” Nowadays, strongly endangered by various human activities such as the building of streets and aquaducts¹, it dwells in small populations in two restricted areas in the Cypriot Troodos mountain range, in gorges deeply cut into the hills by rivulets and at waterfalls.

For several years, the English writer Valerie Sinclair, resident in Paphos, has explored and observed the Cypriot countryside and its floral treasures. She published a comprehensive book on the flora of the island for nature lovers. Its distinctive charm are its poems that sing the praises of beautiful or extraordinary species. In spite of the delicacy of butterworts, she seemed to be frightened by their hidden aggressive “cruel” insectivorous behaviour and was inspired to write the following (Sinclair 1992:107):

Butterwort

*On Troodos mount in ambush lies
This cruel plant with violet eyes.
Innocent insects, gathering round
Seductive blooms in marshy ground.
Alight upon adhesive leaves,
To find—too late—how sight deceives.
Carnivorous Butterwort, thou wert meant
For loitering with foul intent.*

The *Flora Graeca* project

The botanical exploration of the eastern part of the Mediterranean, its countries and islands, has long been very active. The works of Dioskorides (1. cent. p. Chr.), were for centuries a kind of Bible for physicians, pharmacologists, naturalists, and philologists. Since the area was under the political power of the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic, research was restricted. Merchants, diplomats, pilgrims, and both professional and amateur travellers were prohibited from visiting the region.

¹Monasteries were supplied with spring water by aquaducts: cf. Unger & Kotschy (1865:499).

In spite of these prohibitions, great efforts were made to obtain direct knowledge of the region.

One of the travellers was the English John Sibthorp (1758-1796), Doctor of Medicine and Elected Third Sherardian Professor of Botany at the University of Oxford. Walpole (1820: XII) notes that Sibthorp's "researches have greatly advanced our knowledge of the natural history of Greece, and of some islands of the Archipelago", i.e. the Aegean Sea including Cyprus. From 1784 to 1787 and from 1794 to 1795, Sibthorp and his companions undertook two long-lasting expeditions into the "Levant" (as the territory was then called).

The most important results of Sibthorp's explorations were laid down in the two volumes of *Florae Graecae Prodrromus* (1806-1816) and in the ten volumes of the magnificent *Flora Graeca* (Sibthorpiana) (1806-1840), which were planned by Sibthorp and edited after his death² by James Edward Smith (1759-1828)³ and John Lindley (1799-1865)⁴. The work is distinguished not only by the great number of plant species new to science (approximately 2,800) but above all by the excellent illustrations based on the pencil sketches and water colours of his apt draughtsman Ferdinand Bauer⁵.

Flora Graeca is a very rare book (see Figure 1). Only about thirty copies were originally printed. Between 1845 and 1847, the publisher Henry Bohn, London, arranged a reissue of forty copies⁶. The work was virtually inaccessible for most European botanists (Stearn 1967:176). Moreover, nearly all copies in our scientific libraries are mixtures of the original and the new edition. That is so with the copy at the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen that I have studied.

In 1799 Smith started his laborious work of editing the *Prodrromus* and the *Flora*. He had at his hands all the materials available at Oxford: Sibthorp's specimens (unmounted and without annotations)⁷, Bauer's pencil outline drawings (some with locality data, but without scientific or collector's names), Bauer's watercolours (not annotated), Sibthorp's diaries and field notes (containing many scientific names, locality data, but no descriptions) and Sibthorp's incomplete manuscript for the *Prodrromus* (without descriptions).

Smith (1816) wrote that he had Sibthorp's outline for the *Prodrromus*, but for the *Flora* only the figures had been prepared, "nor any botanical characters or descriptions whatever...The final

²John Sibthorp had made his life's work the study of the plants of Dioskorides in their natural habitat (after having studied the Dioskorides manuscript at Vienna) and their identification with the species living today. In March 1786, to realize this plan, he journeyed to Crete with the Austrian draughtsman Ferdinand Bauer, and then stayed for an even longer time in Cyprus. He visited Asia Minor, Athos and Athens and returned in 1787 to Oxford. In 1794-1795 he revisited—without Bauer—the Aegean Sea and the Peloponnesus. On his return he caught a deadly illness and died at the beginning of 1796, before completing his opus magnum.

³Sir James Edward Smith, English botanist, the first president of the Linnean Society London, edited between 1806 and 1816 the two volumes of *Florae Graecae Prodrromus* and between 1806 and 1830 volumes 1-7(1) of *Flora Graeca*.

⁴John Lindley, English botanist, founder and for forty years secretary of the Royal Botanical Society. After the death of J. E. Smith, Lindley produced volumes 7(2)-10 of *Flora Graeca* within about 10 years (completed in 1840). See Stearn 1967:170).

⁵Ferdinand Bauer (1760-1826), Austrian landscape- and animal-painter, accompanied Sibthorp on his first trip to Greece during 1786 to 1787. He brought home a great many sketches of landscapes, animals, and plants, the latter the basis of the plant illustrations of *Flora Graeca*. These illustrations were subsequently engraved by James Sowerby, his sons and collaborators. It is said that in the first volumes the illustrations were coloured by Bauer (Bauer left England in 1814 and returned to Vienna) and Sowerby. These illustrations represent "the Non plus ultra of accuracy, botanical reliability and artistic beauty" ("das Non plus ultra an Genauigkeit, botanischer Zuverlässigkeit und artistischer Schönheit"; Nissen 1966:117).

⁶The new edition is equivalent to the first, and is only distinguishable by the water mark.

⁷The question whether Bauer collected herbarium material during the journey in the Levant has been discussed by various botanists. Kotschy was convinced that he did (Unger & Kotschy 1865:295). Smith seemed to be of the same opinion, because he wrote in the paragraph on *Pinguicula* (in Rees 1814: 482) "gathered by Dr. Sibthorp and Mr. Ferdinand Bauer, in watery places near Comandria, in the isle of Cyprus." But Lack & Mabberley (1999:182) have found no evidence that he did, apart from the allusive note 'D. Ferd. Bauer' following several entries in the *Prodrromus* (in the case of *P. crystallina* the *Prodrromus* has 'D. F. Bauer', the *Flora* 'D. Ferd. Bauer').

determination of the species, the distinctions of such as were new, and all critical remarks, have fallen to the lot of the editor” (i.e. to Smith). Smith had already explained the background of the whole *Flora Graeca*, in the introduction to the first instalment of the *Prodromus* (1806), that “in both works the botanical observations, the specific characters and the descriptions are all to be attributed to me: for Sibthorp left all these untouched” (here I use the translation of the Latin text by Lack & Mabberley, 1999:200).

Lack & Mabberley (1999:226) clearly pointed out: “*Flora Graeca*, one of the most sumptuous botanical works ever published and in the quality of its illustrations surpassed by few...was universally praised by commentators.” “The accuracy of Bauer’s botanical drawings in both form and colour has been universally praised” (Lack & Mabberley 1999:109). Smith and Lack analysing Bauer’s work in detail did not find more than very minor mistakes. However, all the leading experts who studied the *Flora Aegaea* “were puzzled by the discrepancies between the precision of the illustrations painted by Bauer and the confused nature of the locality data by Sibthorp, who had not correlated his specimens and drawings with his field notes” (Lack & Mabberley 199:227). Objectively we must conclude that the famous work, undoubtedly a “Markstein” in the history of descriptive botany, is the result of the effort of many persons, and especially of two—the excellent draughtsman Ferdinand Bauer and the skillful and versatile botanist James Edward Smith—who with immense engagement fulfilled “their master’s (i.e. Sibthorp’s) will”.

The detection of the “cruel” *Pinguicula crystallina*

With respect to our *Pinguicula* we learn from Sibthorp’s diary of his first journey that the four-person-party —J. Sibthorp, F. Bauer, J. Hawkins⁸, and N. Imrie⁹—travelled across Cyprus for five weeks from about early April to mid May 1787.

On May 1st 1787, the group descended from the summit of the Troodos mountain range (Khionistra) northwards, entering the Val of Soulea (Xeropotamos; cf. Unger & Kotschy 1865). Sibthorp’s translation by Lack & Mabberley (1995:62)¹⁰ reads, “on this day...in the diary the names of two small rosette plants discovered ‘in a little morass in the vale... The stay of my Draughtsman to sketch these plants was the cause of my losing my Companions’ ” (i.e. Hawkins, Imrie) (MS Sherard 247, f. 13r (OXF)). The draughtsman was, of course, Bauer. Sibthorp continued that one of these plants is named “*Pinguicula villosa*, certainly referring to *P. crystallina* Sm. Bauer very carefully studied the slimy leaf surface of this tiny insectivorous plant, noting ‘Wasertropfen’ (sic!) (water drops) on his pencil sketch.”

This passage contradicts some of the details given by Walpole (1820:23) from “the papers of the late Dr. Sibthorp,” in which Sibthorp recalls his travels in Val of Soulea: “In a little morass, in passing through the vale, I had picked up the *Lobelia setacea* [= *Solenopsis minuta*; cf. Meikle 1985:1244] and *Pinguicula crystallina*. My draughtsman stopping to sketch these plants was the cause of my losing my companions, who slept at a neighbouring monastery.”

Lack & Mabberley (1999:31) confirmed that Walpole had the Sibthorp diaries on loan from Oxford and had been in contact with J. Hawkins and J.E. Smith. When Walpole edited “the papers of the late Dr. Sibthorp” he often substantially shortened the texts producing a kind of patchwork, and in the case of our *Pinguicula* he seems to have replaced Sibthorp’s original epithet *villosa* by the (in the eyes of Sibthorp’s successors correct) epithet *crystallina* given by Smith in *Florae Graecae Prodromus I* (1806:11). But, he didn’t inform the reader about his change of the nomina.

From the *Prodromus* we learn by the allusive note “D.F. Bauer” following the entry of

⁸John Hawkins (1761-1841), friend and companion of Sibthorp. He was strongly interested in natural sciences, especially in earth science (mineralogist). First research journey 1784-1788 (February 1787 to August 1787 together with Sibthorp in Cyprus) and second one 1793-1798 (1794-1795 with Sibthorp in Zakynthos and Morea). In 1799, he arranged the publication of *Florae Graecae Prodromus* and *Flora Graeca*.

⁹Ninian Imrie (?-1820), “Scottish gentleman geologist”, elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, accompanied Sibthorp on his tour from Istanbul to Patras (March to September 1787).

¹⁰I am much indebted to the excellent, profound, and meticulous *Flora Graeca* Story by H. Walter Lack (1999; with D.J. Mabberley), that sheds some light on the dark caused by the many-fold mistakes, errors and inconsistencies that are found in literature on Sibthorp’s opus magnum.



Figure 1: Frontispiece to *Flora Graeca*, vol.1 (London 1806); a coloured engraving based on a drawing by Ferdinand Bauer (altered at the suggestion of J.E. Smith). The plants arranged around an oval are (in a clockwise direction) — top: *Gladiolus triphyllus*, *Salvia pomifera*, *Salvia lanigera*; — bottom: *Panicum teneriffae*, *Veronica gentianoides*, *Cyperus fuscus*, *Fedia cornucopiae*, *Morina persica*, *Salvia lanigera*, *Gynandris sisyrinchium*. Within the oval (left down) the title written by [N.] Tomkin [Scrispit] and (right down) the signum of the engraver Halliwell & Co [Sculp] (cf. Lack 1997:625,627). —Photocopy: Photolabor Universität Göttingen.

Pinguicula crystallina that Bauer had apparently collected the plant! However, Kotschy (in Unger & Kotschy 1865:295) and Holmboe (1914:167) ascribe the collection of our *Pinguicula* “an Quellen von Evrico” (i.e., around springs of Evrico) to Sibthorp and that of “Comanderia” to Bauer. The (relatively poor) type label of *Pinguicula crystallina* has the handwritten phrase “*Pinguicula crystallina* Sibth.” without any additional note (Casper 1970:279, Abb. 3; photocopy). So it is perhaps unclear if Bauer or Sibthorp collected the type specimen of *Pinguicula crystallina*.

The “iconotype” of *Pinguicula crystallina* (*Flora Graeca* 1:8, tab. 11)

Bauer prepared pencil sketches of many plants in the field, from live specimens, during Sibthorp’s first journey (Lack & Mabberley 1999: 108, 231). He used a code for recording the colours of the plants he sketched, and the sketches are surrounded by what Lack & Mabberley (1999) evocatively call “clouds of numbers” that refer to the various colours of his code. This method of recording colours was in response to the hurry in which the expedition took place, yet was effective in producing accurate water colours later when more time was available. Bound in one volume, Bauer’s pencil outline drawings are preserved sub MS Sherard 247 (OXF; following Lack & Mabberley 1999:108).¹¹ *Pinguicula crystallina* is found on folio 13r with the annotations “Cybrus” and “Wassertropfen” (sic!) by Bauer but without a scientific name. In addition to a sketch of the habit of the plant, are accurate drawings of “*calyx, corolla pictoris opo expansa, labium superius magnitudine auctum, stamina et pistillum et pistillum scorsim*” (see *Flora Graeca* 1:8, tab. 11).

The *Pinguicula crystallina* water colour (see Back Cover) prepared by Bauer for the *Flora Graeca* is kept in the Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford, sub MS Sherard 244 f. 96 (OXF; following Lack & Mabberley 1999:250). Smith annotated the illustration in pencil “11” (individual number cited in the *Prodromus* and the *Flora*), “38” (the number of the respective species entry in the *Prodromus*), and “*Pinguicula crystallina*”. Bauer usually signed finished water colours “Ferd. Bauer del”, but no annotation by Bauer of any kind is on the work, suggesting the water colour was unfinished.

I have mentioned that the engravings on copper of Bauer’s drawings were executed by James Sowerby¹² and his company. Sowerby’s job was difficult and laborious. Many of Bauer’s water colours had been left unfinished; the pencil outline drawings had been only partly coloured. But it was Sibthorp’s express will that his opus magnum should be a coloured one. In all his work, Sowerby followed Bauer meticulously, and the result was a set of 966 folio engraved and coloured plates, comprising 28,980 individual figures. Lack & Mabberley (1999:231) concluded that “Sowerby, his sons, and their collaborators did a marvellous job, equal in quality to the work of that extraordinary plant illustrator, Ferdinand Bauer.”

Taylor (in Meikle 1985:1244) pointed out that the plant shown on plate 11 of *Flora Graeca* 1 (1806) is “uncharacteristic of Cyprus material of *Pinguicula crystallina*.” The term uncharacteristic refers to the feature “median lobe of the lower corolla-lip...deeply bifid.” Taylor, aware of Bauer’s reputation as “normally the most accurate of draughtsmen” explains the (alleged) inaccuracy by supposing that “he may have had insufficient time to complete his sketch from fresh material.” Indeed, Bauer was under great time pressure in the field—during the expedition they had to move quickly from one spot to another—as it is evident from Sibthorp’s diary and Walpole’s extract (see above). We can conclude that Bauer was stressed when he made his true-to-life sketch of our *Pinguicula*. His (unfinished) water colour elaborated in his studio in Oxford is not of the usual quality. But did he really fail? Having studied in 1994 our *Pinguicula* in its natural habitat in Cyprus and having compared it with a great many photographs taken by different professional and amateur plant lovers I must note that the variation of the feature “median corolla lobe rounded to emarginated” is enormous (see Figure 2). Admittedly, the “deeply bifid median corolla lobe” is, as I have seen, extremely rare.¹³ Nevertheless, the water colour by Bauer must have induced Pantocsek (1874:75) to write wrongly [in *Pinguicula crystallina*:] that “*corollae labium inferius quadrilobum*”, when discussing the relation of the Cypriot taxon to his *P. laeta* [= *P. hirtiflora*] from Montenegro.

¹¹MS Sherard 237 (Lack & Mabberley 1999:108) is a misprint.

¹²James Sowerby (1757-1822), famous English painter and engraver; his *English Botany* (1790-1814) contains about 2,600 plates. Senior of the Sowerby company, a family business.

¹³It is unlikely that Bauer had in his hands such an aberrant specimen. Perhaps his true-to-life sketch was not clear enough.



Figure 2: *Pinguicula crystallina* corolla variation. The photographs show that the figures presented by Bauer in the *Flora Graeca* (1806:1, p. 8, tab. 11) as well those published by Taylor (1985:2, p. 2445, fig.1) are not really "typical". —on top: Cyprus, Caledonian Falls, S of Mt. Troodos, 1,360 m. 21/5/1980. Flowers white with yellow palate-like structure at throat; note the short corolla upper lip lobes and the purple nerves. —middle: Cyprus, Kakopetria, Ayios Nikolaos, 15.5.1996. Flowers with lilac-white-yellow corolla lower lip lobes. — Bottom: Cyprus, origin as in 1. Comparison of three white flowers in lateral, dorsal and ventral view; note the short corolla upper lip lobes, the broad corolla lower lip median lobe at apex not emarginate, the greenish-yellow tube and the short obtuse spur. Preparation and photographs: Jürg Steiger, Bern.

From the above discussion, we see that *Pinguicula crystallina* was detected on May 1, 1787 by J. Sibthorp and F. Bauer in the Cypriot Troodos mountain range, collected (probably) and sketched at the *locus classicus* “Co(a)manderia”¹⁴ by F. Bauer, and then nominated and described by J.E. Smith. The date of publication is November 1806 in the *Prodromus* as well as in the *Flora*.

The taxon¹⁵ should be quoted as follows (cf. Taylor in Meikle 1985:1243; Lack & Mabberley 1999:199 — photocopy of pp.10—11 of the *Prodromus*, vol. 1; Lack & Mabberley 1999: 208 — photocopy of p. 8 of the *Flora*, vol. 1):

Pinguicula crystallina Sm. in Sibth. et Sm., *Florae Graecae Prodromus* 1:11 (1806); *Flora Graeca*.1:8; tab. 11 (1806).

Type: Cyprus: *In rivulis prope vicum Canandriae in insulâ Cypro. D. F(erd). Bauer (OXF).*

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¹⁴Co(a)mand(e)ria, region near Finike (Lack & Mabberley 1999:283).

¹⁵*Pinguicula crystallina* Sm. is said to be related to *Pinguicula hirtiflora* Ten. The nomen *Pinguicula crystallina* has priority over *P. hirtiflora*. If Tenore’s taxon is regarded as conspecific with *Pinguicula crystallina*, it must be put into synonymy. Tenore’s nomen was first published in 1811 (Casper 2006). His assertion that he would have observed his *Pinguicula* for the first time in 1806 in the kingdom of Naples has never been verified and has no nomenclatural consequences.

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7th Conference of the ICPS in 2008!

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the 2008 International Carnivorous Plant Society Conference will be held in Sydney, Australia. The venue chosen is the Royal Botanic Gardens, in the heart of the city, close to many facilities. Since this is the first time this biennial conference has been held in the Southern Hemisphere it was deemed appropriate for it to be held at a time when the carnivorous plants across most of southern Australia would be at their best, and so the conference will be held from the 25nd to the 28th of September. The conference will include a number of lectures and demonstrations, and there will be some optional field trips to the Blue Mountains and Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens, both within 3 hours drive from Sydney. Provisions are also being made for a field trip to see *Cephalotus*, pygmy sundews and tuberous sundews in South Western Australia for conference attendees able to make it to this part of the country during their stay down under. Stay tuned for further details, and please mark the dates in your diaries; we'd love to see you in Sydney in 2008.

Greg Bourke